

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS:

Minnesota Workplace Safety Report

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Minnesota's workplaces became safer for workers during 2003. The latest occupational injury and illness figures show there were an estimated 111,600 recordable injury and illness cases in 2003; about 29,900 cases involved one or more days away from work. The comparable figures for 2002 were 120,500 total cases and 33,500 days-away-from-work cases. There were 72 work-related fatalities in 2003, down from 81 fatalities in 2002.

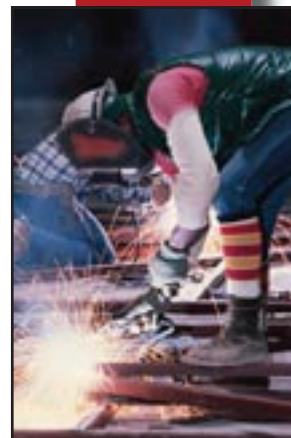
The latest occupational injury and illness figures show that about 310 Minnesotans are hurt at work or become ill from job-related causes each day. These injuries, illnesses and deaths exact a toll on workers and their families and also affect business costs and productivity. Workers' compensation costs in Minnesota approached \$1.5 billion in 2003. In 2002 (the most current data available), the average cost of an insured claim was more than \$6,500. There are a myriad of other costs of workplace injuries and illnesses that are more difficult to measure, such as delayed production, hiring and training of new workers, pain and suffering, and those economic and non-economic losses to injured workers and their families that are not covered by workers' compensation.

The Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) has released its annual *Minnesota Workplace Safety Report*, detailing injury and illness rates and workplace fatalities for 2003. The report is based on the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' *Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses* and *Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries* (CFOI). The report is available on the DLI Web site at www.doli.state.mn.us/rsreport.html.

The following are the major highlights from that report.

Nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses

- An estimated 111,600 nonfatal workplace injuries and illnesses were reported in Minnesota's private industry and public sector workplaces during 2003, resulting in a rate of 5.5 cases per 100 full-time-equivalent (FTE) workers. The 2002 injury and illness rate was 6.0 cases per 100 FTE workers.
- An estimated 57,000 cases in 2003 resulted in days away from work, job transfer or restrictions. The rate for these injuries was 2.8 cases per 100 FTE workers, a 10 percent decrease from the 2002 rate.
- The rate of cases with days away from work was 1.5 per 100 FTE workers, compared to 1.7 cases in 2002.



Safety report, continues ...

Safety report, continued ...

- Minnesota's private sector total and lost-workday case rates were below the total U.S. rates until the early 1990s, but have been significantly above the U.S. rates since 1996. For the private sector in 2002, the total case rate was 5.5 for the state versus 5.0 for the nation.
- Minnesota's rate of cases with days away from work was roughly equal to the national rate starting in 1996, and it dropped below the national rate in 2003: 1.4 for the state vs. 1.5 for the nation.

Industry subsectors with the highest total case rates, Minnesota, 2003

Industry	Rate per 100 FTE workers
Nursing and residential care – local government	17.7
Transportation equipment manufacturing	17.3
Couriers and messengers	13.6
Primary metal manufacturing	12.8
Wood product manufacturing	12.7
Animal production	12.5
Nursing and residential care facilities – private	10.5
Warehousing and storage	9.8
Hospitals – local government	9.6
Construction of buildings	9.6

- Minnesota's industry sectors with the highest total injury and illness rates per 100 FTE workers were: construction (9.3); agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting (8.8); and manufacturing (7.5).
- Four of the 10 industry subsectors with the highest total case rates were in manufacturing and three were in health care and social assistance. These industries accounted for 16 percent of the recordable cases.

Additional statistics about the characteristics of the injured workers, the characteristics of their injuries and the amount of time away from work are available for cases with days away from work.

- Sprains and strains accounted for 45 percent of the cases with days away from work. The second-highest category was soreness and pain, accounting for 10 percent of the cases.
- The back and upper extremities were the most commonly injured body parts, accounting for nearly half the cases.

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- Overexertion, often while lifting people or objects, falls and contact with objects and equipment were the most common injury events.
- The injured worker's own motion or bodily position was the most frequent source of injury, followed by floors and ground surfaces, and containers.

Fatal occupational injuries

The CFOI covers all fatal work injuries in the private and public sectors, regardless of program coverage; thus, it includes federal workers and self-employed workers, along with all others. However, fatal *illnesses* (such as asbestosis) are excluded.

- In 2003, 72 Minnesotans were fatally injured on the job.
- Among industry sectors, agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting recorded the highest number of worker fatalities, with 19. Construction and transportation and warehousing had the second-highest number of fatalities, with 10 cases each.
- The most frequent causes of Minnesota's fatal work injuries for 2003 were: highway transportation accidents (25 percent); struck by a falling object (15 percent); and falls to a lower level (13 percent).



Safety allies: Workplace Safety Consultation, Minnesota Mechanical Contractors Association



Minnesota Mechanical Contractors Association recently signed on as an ally in Minnesota OSHA Workplace Safety Consultation's Alliance Program. The agreement enables organizations committed to workplace safety and health to collaborate with MNOSHA to prevent injuries and illnesses in the workplace. MNOSHA and its allies work together to reach out to, educate and lead the nation's employers and their employees in improving and advancing workplace safety and health.

At left: Steve Patterson, executive vice president, Minnesota Mechanical Contractors Association, and Roslyn Wade, assistant commissioner, Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry, sign the alliance agreement.